

Law enforcement grapples with U.S. Capitol security after plot

By LOLITA BALDOR, ASHRAF KHALIL, and NOMAAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is reviewing a police request to keep National Guard troops patrolling the U.S. Capitol for another 60 days following evidence of a "possible plot" by a militia group to storm the building again, two months after Trump supporters smashed through windows and doors in an insurrection meant to halt the certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory. There were no signs of disturbance Thursday at the heavily secured building, with Capitol Police and Guardsmen on duty and the streets and grounds around the building closed off with an imposing razor-wire-topped fence erected

after the Jan. 6 riot. There was also no evidence of a large group heading to Washington despite the warning.

Still, the threat distressed law enforcement officials, who are grappling with how best to secure the Capitol after a dismal showing in January, when rioters sent lawmakers fleeing the iconic building in a stunning siege broadcast around the world. Five people died in the riot, including a U.S. Capitol Police officer and a woman shot by police.

Several investigations are underway into security and intelligence failures, and lawmakers have asked for a long-term plan for when the Guard eventually withdraws.

Continued on next page



National Guard stand guard at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, March 4, 2021.

Associated Press



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National Guard keep watch on the Capitol, Thursday, March 4, 2021, on Capitol Hill in Washington.
Associated Press

Continued from Front

Right now, there are about 5,200 remaining in D.C., the last of the roughly 26,000 who were brought in for President Biden's inauguration, which went off with no problems. Members of both parties have complained that the fence encircling the Capitol seals off access to constituents and the general public, projecting an image at odds with the seat of American democracy. The most recent threat appeared to be connected

to a far-right conspiracy theory, mainly promoted by supporters of QAnon, that former President Donald Trump would rise again to power on March 4 and that thousands would come to Washington to try to remove Democrats from office. March 4 was the original presidential inauguration day until 1933, when it was moved to Jan. 20. But Trump was miles away in Florida. In Washington, on one of the warmest days in weeks, the National

Mall was almost deserted, save for joggers, journalists, and a handful of tourists trying to take photos of the Capitol dome through the fencing. The House had been expected to have a light schedule but called off its session, staying in late Wednesday to wrap up its work in part because of the threat. The Senate remained in session Thursday on Biden's big COVID-19 relief bill. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., dismissed the

"silliness" of the alleged plot to restore Trump. Still, she said with "the threat of all the president's men out there, we have to ensure, with our security, that we are safe enough to do our job, but not impeding" Congress. Online chatter identified by authorities included discussions among members of the Three Percenters, an anti-government militia group, concerning possible plots against the Capitol on Thursday, according to two law enforcement officials who were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Members of the Three Percenters were among the extremists who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6. But federal agents found no significant increases in the number of hotel rooms being rented in Washington, or in flights to the area, car rental reservations or buses being chartered. Online chatter about the day on extremist sites was declining. U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, was briefed by law enforcement about the possible threat and said lawmakers were braced for whatever might come. "We have the razor wire, we have the National Guard. We didn't have that January 6. So I feel very confident in the security," he said. But those measures aren't permanent. The Pentagon was reviewing a request by Capitol Police to extend the National Guard deployment for 60 days. About 5,200 National Guard members remain in D.C., the remainder of the roughly 26,000 who were brought in for President Biden's inauguration in January, which went off with no problems. Some states have threatened to pull their Guardsmen amid reports that some troops had been made to take rest breaks in parking garages or served spoiled food. Other Guardsmen have said they have been given good meals with accommodations for those on vegan or halal diets. In Michigan, which sent 1,000 troops, Democratic

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said she did "not have any intention of agreeing to an extension of this deployment." Capitol police and other federal law enforcement agencies took heavy criticism from Congress in contentious hearings this week on their handling of the Jan. 6 riot. Police were ill-prepared for the mass of Trump supporters, some in tactical gear and armed, and it took hours for National Guard reinforcements to come. Maj. Gen. William Walker, the commanding general of the District of Columbia National Guard, said more than three hours passed during the afternoon of the riot before he received word just after 5 p.m. that his troops could deploy. Meanwhile, Trump continues to promote lies that the election was stolen from him through mass voter fraud, even though such claims have been rejected by judges and Trump's former attorney general. He repeatedly told those lies on social media and in a charged speech on Jan. 6 in which he implored thousands of supporters to "fight like hell." Many of those supporters eventually walked to the Capitol grounds and overran officers to breach the building. Trump was impeached by the House on a charge of incitement of insurrection but was acquitted by the Senate. So far, about 300 people have been charged with federal crimes for their roles in the riot. Trump's election rhetoric continues to be echoed by many national and local Republicans posting online messages about voter fraud and questioning the legitimacy of Biden's victory. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki cited "a years-long trend of false narratives fueling violence." "On the specifics of today's threats, the FBI and DHS have warned that the threat of domestic violent extremism, particularly racially motivated and anti-government extremists, did not begin or end on January 6 and we have been vigilant day in and day out," she said Thursday. □

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GOP state lawmakers seek to nullify federal gun limits

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — With Democrats controlling the presidency and Congress, Republican state lawmakers concerned about the possibility of new federal gun control laws aren't waiting to react.

Legislation in at least a dozen states seeks to nullify any new restrictions, such as ammunition limits or a ban on certain types of weapons. Some bills would make it a crime for local police officers to enforce federal gun laws.

That can create confusion for officers who often work with federal law enforcement, said Daniel Isom, a former chief of the St. Louis Police Department who is now a senior advisor for Everytown for Gun Safety. Federal law plays a big role in some areas, such as keeping guns away from domestic violence offenders.

Putting local officers in a position to decide which laws to enforce is the last thing police need at a time when cities such as St. Louis are experiencing a rise in violent crime, Isom said.

"This has been an extremely challenging year for both communities and law enforcement, and to ask any more mental strain on officers at this point in



In this Oct. 2, 2018, file photo, semi-automatic rifles fill a wall at a gun shop in Lynnwood, Wash.

Associated Press

time seems to be quite displaced," he said. Gun sales also have set monthly records nationwide since the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

Isom is concerned about a Missouri measure passed by the state House that would allow police departments with officers who enforce federal gun laws to be sued and face a \$50,000 fine. It's not the first time Missouri has considered such a bill, but supporters pointed to President Joe Biden taking office as a reason to pass it now.

In Utah, Republican Rep. Cory Maloy also referenced the incoming ad-

ministration after the state House passed his bill with a similar provision forbidding the enforcement of federal gun laws. Many Republican state lawmakers see attempts to pass federal firearms restrictions as a threat to the Second Amendment.

"We really feel the need to protect those rights," he said. Several states passed similar laws under then-president Barack Obama, although judges have ruled against them in court. Most of the latest crop of federal nullification proposals focus on police officers inside their states who primarily enforce state rather than

federal laws.

While Biden has called for a ban on assault weapons, any new gun legislation will likely face an uphill climb given the political polarization that has tripped up past administrations. Democratic lawmakers from conservative-leaning states also could join Republicans in opposing new gun restrictions. Any measures likely to pass would have broad support, like background checks on all gun sales, said Everytown President John Feinblatt.

Those dynamics haven't stopped state lawmakers who want to make the first move to protect gun

rights in their states. Federal nullification bills have been introduced in more than a dozen other states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wyoming, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia and Iowa. In Texas, the governor has called for the state to become a Second Amendment sanctuary.

In Arizona, a Senate proposal that passed the chamber on Wednesday would allow officers to be sued for enforcing federal gun restrictions that the state considers violations of the Second Amendment. They potentially could face criminal charges. A bill in the House doesn't include those punishments, but its sponsor, Republican Rep. Leo Biasiucci, said it would be a clear rejection of federal restrictions on assault-style weapons, high-capacity magazines or other firearms.

"They can do that at a federal level, but in Arizona it's not going to fly," he said. His proposal passed the state House last week over the objections of Democrats such as Rep. Daniel Hernandez of Tucson, who was present at the 2011 shooting that severely injured former U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords. □

Court raises bar for some immigrants to avoid deportation

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday made it harder for longtime immigrants who have been convicted of a crime to avoid deportation.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote the opinion for a 5-3 conservative majority that ruled against a Mexican citizen who entered the U.S. illegally and has lived in the country for 25 years. The man, Clemente Avelino Pereida, had been charged in Nebraska with using a fraudulent Social Security card to get a job and convicted under a state law against criminal impersonation.

Not all criminal convictions inevitably lead to deportation, but Gorsuch wrote for the court that Pereida failed to prove he was not convicted of a serious crime.

Under immigration law, "certain nonpermanent aliens seeking to cancel a lawful removal order must prove that they have not been convicted of a disqualifying crime," Gorsuch wrote.

In a dissent for the three liberal justices, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that the court instead should have ruled for Pereida because he was convicted under a law that includes seri-

ous offenses, falling into the category of crimes of moral turpitude, and less serious ones.

"The relevant documents in this case do not show that the previous conviction at issue necessarily was for a crime involving moral turpitude," Breyer wrote.

Immigrants with criminal convictions who are facing deportation can ask the attorney general to allow them to remain in the country, if the conviction wasn't for a serious crime and they have lived here at least 10 years, among other criteria.

Based on Thursday's ruling, Pereida can't seek that



In this Nov. 5, 2020 file photo, the Supreme Court is seen in Washington.

Associated Press

relief. Justice Amy Coney Barrett did not take part in the case because she had

not yet joined the court when the case was argued in October. □

17% of food production globally wasted, U.N. report estimates

By **CANDICE CHOI**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Instead of finishing your leftovers, you let them go bad and buy takeout.

It's a familiar routine for many — and indicative of habits that contribute to a global food waste problem that a new United Nations report says needs to be better measured so that it can be effectively addressed.

The U.N. report estimates 17% of the food produced globally each year is wasted. That amounts to 931 million metric tons (1.03 billion tons) of food.

The waste is far more than previous reports had indicated, though direct comparisons are difficult because of differing methodologies and the lack of strong data from many countries.

"Improved measurement can lead to improved management," said Brian Roe, a food waste researcher at Ohio State University who was not involved in the report.

Most of the waste — or 61% — happens in house-



In this Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020 file photo, students discard food at the end of their lunch period as part of a lunch waste composting program at an elementary school in Connecticut.

Associated Press

holds, while food service accounts for 26% and retailers account for 13%, the U.N. found. The U.N. is pushing to reduce food waste globally, and researchers are also working on an assessment of waste that includes the food lost before reaching consumers.

The authors note the report seeks to offer a clearer snapshot of the scale of a

problem that has been difficult to assess, in hopes of spurring governments to invest in better tracking.

"Many countries haven't yet quantified their food waste, so they don't understand the scale of the problem," said Clementine O'Connor, of the U.N. Environment Program and co-author of the report.

Food waste has become a

growing concern because of the environmental toll of production, including the land required to raise crops and animals and the greenhouse gas emissions produced along the way. Experts say improved waste tracking is key to finding ways to ease the problem, such as programs to divert inedible scraps to use as animal feed or fertilizer.

The report found food waste in homes isn't limited to higher income countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Roe of Ohio State noted that food sometimes is wasted in poor countries without reliable home refrigeration. In richer countries, people might eat out more, meaning food waste is simply shifted from the home to restaurants.

Roe said cultural norms and policies also could contribute to waste at home — such as massive packaging, "buy one, get one free" deals, or lack of composting programs.

That's why broader system changes are key to helping reduce waste in households, said Chris Barrett, an agricultural economist at Cornell University.

For example, Barrett said, people might throw away food because of a date on the product — even though such dates don't always say when a food is unsafe to eat. "Food waste is a consequence of sensible decisions by people acting on the best information available," he said. □

U.S. traffic deaths spike even as pandemic cuts miles traveled



In this Nov. 17, 2020, file photo provided by the Corvallis Police Department is the scene where an Oregon man crashed a Tesla while going about 100 mph, destroying the vehicle, a power pole and starting a fire when some of the hundreds of batteries from the vehicle broke windows and landed in residences in Corvallis, Ore. Dylan Milota, who survived the crash, was driving the 2019 Tesla S when he lost control.

Associated Press

By **TOM KRISHER**
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Pandemic lockdowns and stay-at-home orders kept many drivers off U.S. roads and

highways last year. But those who did venture out found open lanes that only invited reckless driving, leading to a sharp increase in traffic-crash deaths

across the country.

The nonprofit National Safety Council estimates in a report issued Thursday that 42,060 people died in vehicle crashes in 2020, an 8% increase over 2019 and the first jump in four years. Plus, the fatality rate per 100 million miles driven spiked 24%, the largest annual percentage increase since the council began collecting data in 1923.

And even though traffic is now getting close to pre-coronavirus levels, the bad behavior on the roads is continuing, authorities say. "It's kind of terrifying what we're seeing on our roads," said Michael Hanson, director of the Minnesota Public Safety Department's Office of Traffic Safety. "We're seeing a huge increase in the amount of risk-taking behavior."

Last year's deaths were the most since 2007 when

43,945 people were killed in vehicle crashes. In addition, the safety council estimates that 4.8 million people were injured in crashes last year.

Federal data shows that Americans drove 13% fewer miles last year, or roughly 2.8 trillion miles, said Ken Kolosh, the safety council's manager of statistics. Yet the number of deaths rose at an alarming rate, he said.

"The pandemic appears to be taking our eyes off the ball when it comes to traffic safety," Kolosh said.

Of the reckless behaviors, early data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show speed to be the top factor, Kolosh said. Also, tests of trauma center patients involved in traffic crashes show increased use of alcohol, marijuana and opioids, he said.

In Minnesota, traffic volumes fell 60% when stay-home orders were issued early in the pandemic last spring. Hanson said state officials expected a corresponding drop in crashes and deaths, but while crashes declined, deaths increased.

"Almost immediately the fatality rate started to go up, and go up significantly," Hanson said, adding that his counterparts in other states saw similar increases. "It created less congestion and a lot more lane space for divers to use, and quite honestly, to abuse out there."

In late March and early April, the number of speed-related fatalities more than doubled over the same period in 2019 in the state, Hanson said. Last year, Minnesota recorded 395 traffic deaths, up nearly 9% from 364 in 2019. □

Myanmar crackdown on protests, widely filmed, sparks outrage

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) —

Footage of a brutal crackdown on protests against a coup in Myanmar unleashed outrage and calls for a stronger international response Thursday, a day after 38 people were killed. Videos showed security forces shooting a person at point-blank range and chasing down and savagely beating demonstrators. Despite the shocking violence the day before, protesters returned to the streets Thursday to denounce the military's Feb. 1 takeover and were met again with tear gas.

The international response to the coup has so far been fitful, but a flood of videos shared online showing security forces brutally targeting protesters and other civilians led to calls for more action. The United States called the images appalling, the U.N. human rights chief said it was time to "end the military's stranglehold over democracy in Myanmar," and the world body's independent expert on human rights in the country urged the Security Council to watch the videos before meeting Friday to discuss the crisis.

The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar, which for five decades had languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions. As the generals loosened their grip in recent years, the international community lifted most sanctions and poured in investment.

U.N. special envoy for Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, described Wednesday as "the bloodiest day" since the takeover, when the military ousted the elected government of leader Aung San Suu Kyi. More than 50 civilians, mostly peaceful protesters, are confirmed to have been killed by police and soldiers since then, including the 38 she said died Wednesday.

"I saw today very disturbing video clips," said Schraner Burgener, speaking to reporters at the U.N. in New



Anti-coup protesters discharge fire extinguishers to counter the impact of the tear gas fired by police during a demonstration in Yangon, Myanmar Thursday, March 4, 2021.

Associated Press

York via video link from Switzerland. "One was police beating a volunteer medical crew. They were not armed. Another video clip showed a protester was taken away by police and they shot him from very near, maybe only one meter. He didn't resist to his arrest, and it seems that he died on the street."

She appeared to be referring to a video shared on social media that begins with a group of security forces following a civilian, who they seem to have just pulled out of a building. A shot rings out, and the person falls. After the person briefly raises their head, two of the troops drag the person down the street by the arms.

In other footage, about two dozen security forces, some with their firearms drawn, chase two people wearing the construction helmets donned by many protesters down a street. When they catch up to the people, they repeatedly beat them with rods and kick them. One of the officers is filming the scene on his cell phone.

In yet another video, several police officers repeatedly kick and hit a person with rods, while the person cowers on the ground,

hands over their head. Officers move in and out of the frame, getting a few kicks in and then casually walking away.

While some countries have imposed or threatened to impose sanctions following the coup, others, including those neighboring Myanmar, have been more hesitant in their response. The sheer volume of violent images shared Wednesday, along with the high death toll, raised hopes that the dynamic could change.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Thursday urged all of those with "information and influence" to hold military leaders to account.

"This is the moment to turn the tables towards justice and end the military's stranglehold over democracy in Myanmar," she said.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said the U.S. was "appalled" at the "horrific violence," and the U.N.'s independent expert on human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, said the "systematic brutality of the military junta is once again on horrific display."

"I urge members of the UN Security Council to view the photos/videos of the shocking violence being

unleashed on peaceful protesters before meeting," he said on Twitter.

The Security Council has scheduled closed-door consultations for Friday on calls to reverse the coup including from U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and stop the escalating crackdown.

But Justine Chambers, the associate director of the Myanmar Research Center at the Australian National University, said that while the graphic images would no doubt lead to strong condemnations action on Myanmar would be harder. "Unfortunately I don't think the brutality caught on camera is going to change much," she said. "I think domestic audiences around the world don't have much of an appetite for stronger action, i.e. intervention, given the current state of the pandemic and associated economic issues."

Any kind of coordinated action at the U.N. will be difficult since two permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia, would almost certainly veto it.

Even if the council did take action, U.N. envoy Schraner Burgener cautioned it might not make much of a difference. She said she

warned Myanmar's army that the world's nations and the Security Council "might take huge strong measures."

"And the answer was, 'We are used to sanctions and we survived those sanctions in the past,'" she said. When she also warned that Myanmar would become isolated, Schraner Burgener said, "the answer was, 'We have to learn to walk with only a few friends.'"

Wednesday's highest death toll was in Yangon, the country's biggest city, where an estimated 18 people died. Video at a hospital in the city showed grieving relatives collecting the blood-soaked bodies of family members. Some relatives sobbed uncontrollably, while others looked in shock at the scene around them.

Protesters gathered again Thursday in Yangon. Police again used tear gas to try to disperse the crowds, while demonstrators again set up barriers across major roads.

Protests also continued in Mandalay, where three people were reported killed Wednesday. A formation of five fighter planes flew over the city on Thursday morning in what appeared to be a show of force.

Protesters in the city flashed the three-fingered salute that is a symbol of defiance as they rode their motorbikes to follow a funeral procession for Kyal Sin, also known by her Chinese name Deng Jia Xi, a university student who was shot dead as she attended a demonstration the day before.

As part of the crackdown, security forces have also arrested well over a thousand people, including journalists, according to the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. On Saturday, at least eight journalists, including Thein Zaw of The Associated Press, were detained. He and several other members of the media have been charged with violating a public safety law that could see them imprisoned for up to three years. □

Iran to meet with U.N. technical experts over uranium find

By **DAVID RISING**
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Iran has agreed to sit down with international technical experts investigating the discovery of uranium particles at three former undeclared sites in the country, the head of the U.N. atomic watchdog said Thursday, after months of frustration at Tehran's lack of a credible explanation.

The agreement came as three of the remaining signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran — France, Germany and Britain — backed off the idea of a resolution criticizing Iran for its decision to start limiting access by International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to current facilities. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi told reporters in Vienna it was not up to him to say whether Iran's move to hold talks with his technical experts was linked to the decision of the so-called E3 group, but suggested it was difficult to separate the political side of Iran's nuclear program from the technical side.

"It is obvious for everybody that all these matters need



Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi from Argentina, addresses the media during a news conference behind plexiglass shields after a meeting of the IAEA board of governors at the International Center in Vienna, Austria, Monday, March 1, 2021.

Associated Press

to have some resolution, and when it comes to Iran and I'm not saying anything that Iran itself hasn't said everything is interconnected, of course," he said. "These are different parts of a single whole."

The E3 had floated the idea of the resolution after Iran began restricting in-

ternational inspections last week. After a last-minute trip to Tehran by Grossi, however, some access was preserved.

Russia and China the other members of the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action were reportedly against the resolution, say-

ing it could antagonize Iran further.

Germany's Foreign Ministry told The Associated Press it was common to "discuss all possible options for action" ahead of such meetings, and that despite dropping the resolution, the E3 still had concerns about Iran's "serious violations" of the

nuclear deal.

"Above all, we would like to support the Director General of the IAEA in his efforts to start talks with Iran regarding the open safeguards issues," the ministry said.

Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi, tweeted after the decision that "wisdom prevails" and that the E3 had prevented unnecessary tension.

Iran's Foreign Ministry applauded the move.

"Today's development can maintain the path of diplomacy opened by Iran and the IAEA, and pave the way for full implementation of commitments by all parties to the nuclear deal," spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said. The nuclear deal promised Iran economic incentives in return for the curbs on its nuclear program. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal unilaterally in 2018, saying it needed to be renegotiated.

Since then, Iran has slowly violated the restrictions to try and pressure the remaining nations to increase the incentives to offset new, economy-crippling U.S. sanctions. □

Chaos as freed Nigerian schoolgirls reunited with families

By **LEKAN OYEKANMI**
Associated Press

JANGEBE, Nigeria (AP) — Hundreds of Nigerian girls abducted last week from a boarding school in the country's northwest have been returned to their families amid chaos as security forces opened fire

on a gathering outside the school where the reunions were held Wednesday. One person died and two were injured in the mayhem, according to local media reports. The forces opened fire after stones were thrown at government officials, apparently

in frustration at the drawn-out procedure, said the reports. Anxious and angry parents who were reunited with the girls after six days of waiting grabbed their daughters and left after shots rang out. Many were worried about traveling on the area's dangerous roads at night.

The girls, aged 10 and up, had been abducted from the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe in Nigeria's northwest Zamfara state and were released Tuesday after negotiations.

Zamfara Gov. Bello Matawalle said that 279 girls had been freed.

Upon their release, the girls were brought to the government's provincial offices, Government House,

in Gusau for presentation, before being medically examined and reunited with their families.

Following the kidnappings, the Zamfara state government announced a curfew, which remains in force.

Officials said "bandits" were behind the abduction, referring to the groups of armed men who operate in Zamfara state and kidnap for money or to press for the release of their members from jail.

At the time of the attack, one resident told The Associated Press that the gunmen also attacked a nearby military camp and checkpoint, preventing soldiers from responding to the abductions from the school.

Nigeria has seen several

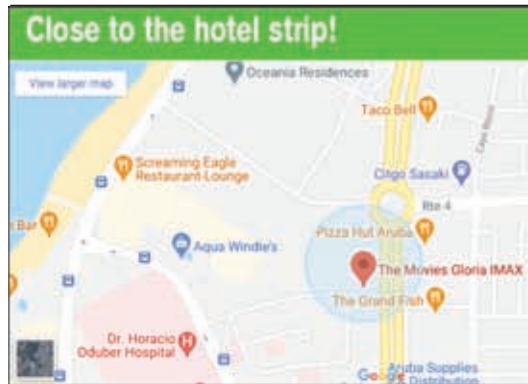
such attacks and kidnappings in recent years, the most notorious in 2014, when 276 girls were abducted by the jihadist rebels of Boko Haram from the secondary school in Chibok in Borno state. More than 100 of those girls are still missing.

Last week's attack came less than two weeks after gunmen abducted dozens of people, including 24 students, from the Government Science College Kagara in Niger State. The students, teachers and family members kidnapped from Kagara were released last week. In December, 344 students were abducted from the Government Science Secondary School Kankara in Katsina State. They were eventually released. □



Parents are reunited with their daughters in Jangabe, Nigeria, Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

Associated Press



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Probe into EU border agency leaves some questions unanswered

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — An inquiry into claims that the European Union's border and coast guard agency was involved in illegally pushing back migrants has found no link to Frontex in any of the incidents but has been unable to establish what happened in five cases, according to the official report into the allegations. The report is by a special working group set up to investigate media allegations that staff, ships or aircraft working with Frontex took part in or were near more than a dozen push-back incidents at the border between Greece and Turkey last year, mostly in the Aegean Sea. The agency's management board will discuss it at an extraordinary meeting on Friday. Frontex, which is responsible for patrolling the external borders of the 27-nation EU, has rejected the push-back allegations and said



In this Friday, Feb. 28, 2020 file photo, migrants arrive aboard a dinghy accompanied by a Frontex vessel at the village of Skala Sikaminias, on the Greek island of Lesbos, after crossing the Aegean sea from Turkey.

that its own internal inquiry could find no evidence to substantiate the claims. Greece, which is in charge of operations involving Frontex on its territory, has also denied reports of push-

backs by its border officers. Pushbacks are forcibly preventing people from entering a country when they might want to apply for asylum. They are contrary to refugee protection agree-

ments, which say people shouldn't be returned to a country where their life and safety might be in danger due to their race, religion, nationality or political views. They also con-

travene EU law and policy. The working group cleared Frontex of any wrongdoing in 8 cases, but said in five cases "it has not been possible to completely resolve the incidents beyond any reasonable doubt," according to part of the restricted report, dated March 1 and seen by The Associated Press.

Investigators could not determine whether the people involved in the five incidents were picked up by Turkish authorities or made it safely onto Greek soil. "There is no indication of anybody injured, reported missing or having died in connection with the respective incidents," the report said.

Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri told EU lawmakers Thursday that "I don't see any substantiated violation of fundamental rights that would be in this report." He didn't elaborate on what else was in the document. □

Associated Press

Mexico to raise security for candidates ahead of elections

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico will step up security for candidates heading into

the largest elections in its history, noting that at least 64 murders related to the

political process have already occurred since September, officials said Thursday.

Security Secretary Rosa Icela Rodríguez said more security forces will be sent to high-risk areas and security would be provided to candidates who receive threats to protect them from what she called the "crime party," efforts by organized crime or white collar actors to designate or block candidates in races around the country. The June 6 elections will choose a new lower chamber of Mexico's Congress, 30 of the country's 32 state legislatures and 15 governors, as well

as local positions. In total more than 21,000 positions will be at stake.

Federal, state and local authorities will have to coordinate on identifying potential risks, Rodríguez said. It won't be easy.

Organized crime is always involved in elections. In 2018, when President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was elected, 48 people running for office were killed. Security consulting firm Etelect tallied 543 aggressions toward politicians. In total, according to Rodríguez, there were 150 murders that year with some political connection. In December, former Jalisco Gov. Aristóteles Sando-

val was shot to death in Puerto Vallarta. Last week, a potential mayoral candidate in the Caribbean coast state of Quintana Roo was gunned down in a cafe. Ignacio Sánchez Cordero was the local tourism secretary in the town of Puerto Morelos. But it isn't just murder. Candidates face kidnappings, threats against their families, extortion, the burning of their homes or businesses. Criminal groups also donate money and offer their own protection to their preferred candidates. They do whatever it takes to control candidates who can help make sure they go unpunished. □



In this May 13, 2018 file photo, women carry a photo of the late Jose Remedios Aguirre, a mayoral candidate who was shot in broad daylight two days prior, during his funeral procession in Apaseo El Alto, Mexico.

Associated Press

LOCAL



Covid-19: the status on Aruba

ORANJESTAD — A year after the 1st case of Covid-19 hit the island and was completely shut down for 3.5 months, Aruba's tourism and economy is picking up bit by bit. Borders had been reopened for US travelers, Europeans, and as per December 1st, 2020 we welcomed back our visitors of Latin America, South America and the rest of the Caribbean with the exception of Venezuela. Rules and protocols are being reviewed and evaluated on a daily basis and adapted as per current situation by a crisis team, in order to protect each and every one visiting and inhabiting our island.

To increase safety measures for the health and wellbeing of travelers and our locals, beginning January 25th, 2021, residents of Brazil are unable to travel to Aruba due to the new variant of the COVID-19 now present in Brazil. This does not apply to visitors residing outside of Brazil who travel on a Brazilian passport. Residents of Brazil wishing to travel to Aruba are encouraged to check Aruba.com frequently as updates will be shared in the near future.

Covid cases

There are currently (as per March 2nd, closing of this edition) 169 active Covid cases on the island. 135 residents and 34 non-residents. There are 27 persons hospitalized of which 9 of them are in the Intensive care unit. A total of 106.368 persons have been tested of which 67.697 were tested at the airport. 69 persons lost the battle against Covid-19. Due to the amount of increase in cases these last days the Government of Aruba took some additional measurements in order to stop the spread as quickly as possible.

Measurement by the Government of Aruba

- Curfew is from 12am to 5am.
- Closing time for businesses is 11pm.

Restaurant rules

- Max four (4) per table indoor and six (6) at a table outdoors.
- Only 1 musician is allowed to perform on stage.
- No musical events that are intended to attract customers.

- Background music is allowed.
- No dancing.

Boats on sea

- Maximum 4 persons on boats/yachts.
- Avoid social events on boats.

Gathering ban

The maximum allowed is increased from 2 people to maximum of 4 people in public areas.

Shopping

- Only 1 person per family inside stores/supermarkets.
- Masks required inside (Remember – Resort Elevators & hallways are inside areas).
- Use masks when 1.5 meter distance is not possible.

Social events

- Max 10 inside (if distance is possible) and 25 outside (if distance is possible).
- No contact sports.
- No permits for public events will be granted.
- Police can stop event if there is disorder.
- New legal basis for fines is introduced which allows police to act more effectively against violations.

Still operative

- Hotels and lodgings are exempted from the closing time, BUT only to serve their registered guests between 10pm and 6am.
- Casinos are not part of the exemption and must close at 11pm.
- Ban on beaches and parking from 7pm to 5am.
- Licensed restaurants on the beach can operate until 10pm – customers to be seated at tables at all times, as per rules.
- Businesses are required to have a compliance officer.
- Business owners are asked to take responsibility for enforcement of rules.

Advice for travelers

Prior to travel, visitors should download the Aruba Department of Public Health's Aruba Health App: A mobile resource for information on COVID-19 health procedures in Aruba, facilitation

of the airport health screening, and faster results for Molecular PCR COVID-19 tests taken in Aruba.

Also as of November 1, 2020 a flat premium of \$30 is applicable for new insurance policies for travelers over 14 years old.

Testing before your return flight

Effective January 26th, 2021, as announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. government will require all international airline passengers to show proof of a negative, PCR or Antigen, Covid-19 test before boarding flights to the United States. In addition, the results of the test must be from no more than 72 hours prior to departure. For the official CDC announcement: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0112-negative-covid-19-air-passengers.html>.

What COVID-19 consumer testing facilities are available in Aruba?

- MedCare Clinic: medcare.aw - (+297) 280-0630 - Whatsapp (+297) 562-4440 - info@medcare.aw
- MedLab: lab.aw - (+297) 586-1600 - Cell/Whatsapp (+297) 597-5544 - info@lab.aw
- Horacio Oduber Hospital: (US\$ 75) <https://www.arubahospital.com/> - servicecenter@hoharuba.com - (+297) 597-4522 (Call or WhatsApp)

Get in contact with the test provider to make an appointment, get details on the exact test performed and their procedures.

Vaccines for Aruba

Aruba received a total of 11.700 Pfizer vaccines as a courtesy of the Dutch Kingdom. The vaccine plan has an eligibility sequence, starting with healthcare workers. Every 3 weeks Aruba is scheduled to receive vaccines, and by June 2021 a total of 85% of the population of Aruba must have received the vaccine. Residents must register to get vaccinated through the Aruba Health App. There are 3 locations assigned for vaccinations to the public to take place. These are Club Don Bosco in Noord, Santa Theresita Center in San Nicolas and Centro Libertador Betico Croes in Santa Cruz. Up till today a total of 23.501 persons registered for the vaccine and a total of 7.857 persons already received the 1st dosage of the vaccine. Also, nine additional cool boxes for transportation and storage of the vaccines have been received and will be used at assigned locations. When vaccinated you still need to adhere to all rules and protocols. Wear your facial mask, practice social distance, and maintain hygiene. The vaccine is not mandatory but, taking the vaccine is encouraged by the authorities.

More information on travel and health requirements can be found on www.aruba.com. □



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Local Farmers Market & Ostriches



MATIVIDIRI — There is an Ostrich Farm in Aruba, did you know? At this beautiful place where ostriches are kept and taken care of you can have double fun this coming weekend! This Sunday, March 7, the Ostrich Farm organizes the monthly local farmers market.

The farmers market's goal is to promote products and artwork made and produced in Aruba. More and more local farmers are actively growing vegetables, fruits, farming animals such as chicken and pigs and selling them to the public. A great way to buy a souvenir to take home.

Or products handmade by Aruban artisans that offer jewelry and handicrafts. Find home grown vegetables, plants, herbs, homemade jams, hot sauces, freshly made ginger juices, fresh baked bread, cakes and cookies.

Indulge in the local ambiance at the Savanna Lodge Bar & Restaurant that sits beneath a large, shady gondola, open on three sides to the cooling Aruban breezes and rugged countryside.

Decorated with unique African figurines from Zimbabwe and with 27ft long wooden hand crafted tables you and your friends or family can admire the market's offerings, relax and enjoy a great meal and an ice cold beer or tropical fruit shake.

You may of course also join in on a tour of the ostriches. For authentic souvenirs, guests can browse around the Framers Market and Art Shop. □

Aruba Ostrich Farm Inc.

Tel: (297) 5859630

Facebook: Aruba Ostrich Farm

Website: www.ArubaOstrichFarm.com

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received an extraordinary story from **George and Mary Ellen Voelker** from Cranesville Pennsylvania. They wrote: "Aruba to me is the most perfect place to be. We spent our 47th wedding anniversary there last October. It was our 20th trip to Aruba and we will be back again in 2 weeks." □

Amazing Azure



EAGLE BEACH — Azure Beach Residences speaks for itself the moment you set foot on the place. The luxurious real estate has all ingredients to offer you a 5-star-de-luxe plate. Located right on the beach, offering a blend between your own condominium with advantages and experience of a hotel and all amenities that belong to a spot in heaven.

Aruba Today was delighted to talk to a wonderful couple from New York, Esteban Marquez and his wife who are proud owner of one of the condos. "We love the condo we have purchased at Azure. We are planning on retirement five years from now, we are from New York. This is excellent, we are very happy with our choice and we love the island." Happy owners on a happy island, it sounds like music to his ears says Alberto Perret-Gentil, Executive Vice-president of Operations at Azure Beach Residences. "In August 2020 we had the grand opening of Tower II of Azure Beach Residences. We see that there is a new trend of people wanting to work from their second home, their vacation condo. Our island is blessed with the perfect beaches and climate, it is very safe and –many do not know this- it has the best internet in the Caribbean." During the COVID-19 crisis Pering Group, also the developer of Harbour House Aruba, stays connected to their market and is able to capture all those people staying home at this time. "We continuously show our new projects and new financial ideas. We are very optimistic. This is going to be the best time in sales in our 20 years on Aruba," Perret-Gentil states.

Tower 1 of Azure Beach Residences has 45 units on the northern and southern corner and is practically sold out. The residence offers two units at the upper level of the Clubhouse which has on the ground level the



Alberto Perret-Gentil, Vice-president of operations

restaurant and the lobby and on the upper level the gym, area for grill and a pool table. Tower 2 offers 60 units with studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom units and 3- bedroom penthouses at the 8th floor. For more information you can visit the website www.azure-aruba.com. Harbour House Aruba is another project of this group offering 94 condominiums in Oranjestad, just in front of the Renaissance Mall. More information can be found at: www.harbourhousearuba.com. □



Powell: Higher inflation temporary, no rate hikes in sight

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell suggested Thursday that inflation will pick up in the coming months but that it would likely prove temporary and not enough for the Fed to alter its record-low interest rate policies.

His message of wait-and-see patience caused bond yields to jump and stocks to fall further, signaling that investors foresee stronger growth and higher inflation on the horizon. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note had jumped from below 1% at the end of last year to roughly 1.4% Wednesday — and then surged above 1.5% during Powell's remarks.

Stock investors, too, dumped shares in the midst of Powell's remarks, in which he suggested that the Fed would need to see both a near-full recovery in the job market and a sustained rise in inflation above its target level before considering a rate hike.

The S&P 500 index ended Thursday with a loss of 1.3% and was showing just a sliver of a gain for the year. The tech-heavy Nasdaq pulled back 2.1%. Higher yields on government bonds can entice some investors to sell



In this Dec. 1, 2020 file photo, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Jerome Powell appears before the Senate Banking Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

stocks and buy Treasuries instead, thereby forcing stock prices down.

Powell also said the outlook for the economy has improved after three months of weak job growth. But he cautioned that the economy and the job market are still far from fully recovered and that full employment would not be achieved this year.

The chairman also offered no signal that the

Fed might respond soon to rising rates on Treasury securities by altering its bond-buying policies. The central bank is purchasing about \$80 billion a month in government bonds. Some analysts argue that the Fed could focus more of those purchases on the 10-year Treasury to keep it from rising much further.

"The market was really looking for more of a definitive stand perhaps against

what's happened with yields," said Lisa Erickson, head of traditional investments at U.S. Bank Wealth Management. "It was looking for more assurance, for example, that the Fed might take action."

The surge in Treasury bond yields has also forced up mortgage rates. Last week, the average rate on the benchmark 30-year mortgage breached the 3% mark for the first time since

July, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. Powell suggested, though, that the Fed would sit tight for the foreseeable future. "We think our current policy stance is appropriate," Powell said.

Earlier this week, San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly and Chicago Fed President Charles Evans said they weren't bothered by the move higher in interest rates. They characterized it as a positive signal that markets expected growth to pick up.

Powell said Thursday that the last week's jump in yields "was notable and caught my attention." But he said the Fed wouldn't be concerned unless the Treasury market became "disorderly" or rates rose persistently enough to threaten the economy's growth.

As the economy reopens in the coming months with vaccines more widely distributed, many economists expect a spending boom that will stretch available supplies of goods and services. That additional spending could send prices up in some sectors of the economy. For example, gas prices have been rising as Americans are venturing out more. □

U.N. finds soaring poverty in virus-hit Latin America region

By EVA VERGARA

Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)

— More than 20 million people were pushed into poverty during pandemic-plagued 2020 across Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.N. economic agency for the region reported Thursday.

Poverty as a whole rose to afflict a total of 208 million people — 33.7% from 30.5% of the population — in a year when the overall gross domestic product collapsed by 7.7%.

Extreme poverty — those without the resources to cover basic food requirements — rose to encompass 78 million people, 12.5% of the region's population, according to the

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. That's the highest percentage in 20 years.

Poverty as a whole rose to afflict a total of 208 million people — 33.7% from 30.5% of the population — in a year when the overall gross domestic product collapsed by 7.7%. The report said the situation would have been worse without household subsidy programs enacted by many governments to cushion the blow for some 84 million households.

The report presented online by agency director Alicia Bárcena also found worsening rates of inequality and unemployment across a region that accounts for just 8.4% of

the world's population but nearly 28 percent of global deaths from COVID-19. The report said more than 507,000 people died of COVID-19 last year across Latin America and the Caribbean.

The report said that deteriorating economic, health and education conditions for households "could forge a vicious cycle of poverty and bad health conditions for wide sectors of the population."

Bárcena said levels of inequality have reached "unsustainable" levels and she called for creation of "a true welfare state, a task long postponed in the region."

Unemployment rose 2.6 percentage points to 10.7



A cat stretches in front of a bakery at La Vega market in Santiago, Chile, Thursday, March 4, 2021.

Associated Press

by the end of the year, with the greatest losses among women, informal workers, youths and migrants.

More than 165 million students were affected by school closures, even if

some — especially those with economic means — were able to turn to remote learning systems. Bárcena also noted "great inequality in access to vaccines" needed to escape from the problem. □

U.S.-China tensions threaten global climate change efforts

By **CHRISTINA LARSON** and **ELLEN KNICKMEYER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The world's hopes for curbing climate change hinge on action by two giant nations whose relations are deteriorating: China and the United States. The two countries both say they are intent on retooling their economies to burn less climate-wrecking coal, oil and gas.

But tensions between them threaten their ultimate success.

China and the United States are the world's No. 1 and No. 2 carbon polluters, respectively, pumping out nearly half of the fossil fuel fumes that are warming the planet's atmosphere.

The fast cuts in carbon needed to stave off the worst of climate change are all but impossible unless these countries work together and basically trust each other's pledges.

During the Trump administration, the U.S. used China's emissions as an excuse not to act, and in the past China pointed to U.S. historical emissions as a reason to resist action.

New details of how quickly China plans to reduce carbon emissions will be revealed Friday when Beijing releases its next Five Year Plan. And in April, President Joe Biden is expected to announce the United States' own new targets for emissions cuts.

The U.S. and China both have appointed veteran envoys as their global climate negotiators, John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua. But while the two senior statesmen worked well together in laying groundwork for the 2015 Paris climate accord, now they face new challenges.

U.S.-China climate diplomacy threatens to be overshadowed by what the United States sees as Beijing's menacing policies toward Hong Kong, Taiwan and the South China Sea, conflict over human rights and trade, and U.S. claims of Chinese espionage.

Meanwhile, Chinese officials are upset about re-



In this Jan. 27, 2021, file photo, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry speaks during a press briefing at the White House in Washington.

strictions imposed by the Trump administration on trade, technology, Chinese media and students in the U.S., and the State Department's declaration this year that atrocities against China's Muslim minorities are a "genocide."

Kerry, a secretary of state under President Barack Obama who was brought back to be Biden's climate envoy, recently told reporters: "Those issues" with China "will never be traded for anything that has to do with climate. That's not going to happen."

But Kerry also called the climate "a standalone issue" with China, drawing criticism from China and from some human-rights advocates in the U.S.

Can climate talks between the two countries survive their other geopolitical battles?

"That's, I think, the huge question," said John Podesta, who oversaw the Obama administration's climate efforts and is close to the Biden administration. "Can you create a lane where you get cooperation on climate" while more contentious issues are dealt with separately? Podesta asked. "Or do they wind up interfering?"

Xie Zhenhua may help the odds.

With his appointment as climate envoy last month, Xie is reprising the role he held during pivotal U.N. climate conferences that struck the world's first major commitments on reducing emissions from fossil fuels.

Prior to his appointment, Xie led a research effort at Tsinghua University in Beijing to map ways for China to stop contributing to global warming by midcentury. His research underpinned President Xi Jinping's surprise pledge in September that China planned to go carbon neutral by 2060 — the first time the country announced a net-zero target.

Joanna Lewis, an expert in China energy and environment at Georgetown University, called Xie "a visionary, and very influential in setting China's domestic policy targets," as well as a skilled negotiator.

Xie's appointment "was a huge overture toward the United States, and particularly to John Kerry," said Angel Hsu, an expert on China and climate change at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Biden has pledged the U.S. will switch to an emissions-

free power sector within 14 years, and have an entirely emissions-free economy by 2050.

Kerry is also pushing other nations to commit to carbon neutrality by then.

Behind the dry numbers, massive spending on infrastructure and technology is needed to switch to a more energy-efficient economy, running on wind, solar and other cleaner-burning fuels. And Biden has a narrow majority in Congress to push his agenda, with Republicans, as well as some Democrats, opposing his plans.

Climate scientists say countries need to move fast to avert catastrophic temperature rises.

In 2019, coal accounted for 58% of China's total primary energy consumption, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Last year, as China's government directed economic relief money to infrastructure projects during the pandemic, the country actually upped its net power capacity from coal by about the equivalent of 15 Hoover Dams, or 30 gigawatts according to the Global Energy Monitor and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

China also funds building of coal-fired power plants abroad, partly to build influence.

Many experts question whether the construction of coal-fired plants is driven by demand, or simply meant to stimulate the economy during a downturn.

Either way, the brand-new coal plants have consequences.

"Every new coal plant that China builds is basically locking in carbon emissions for the next 50 years," said Georgetown's Lewis.

The most important questions now, said Deborah Seligsohn, an expert in Chinese governance and air pollution at Villanova University, are: "How soon can China's carbon emissions peak, and at what level?"

She is watching closely to see what targets are incorporated in the next Five Year Plan, and into China's updated pledges for emission cuts under the Paris climate accord.

The key, climate negotiators say, will be making it worth China's while — financially and in terms of its international standing to slow down its building and funding of new coal plants and speed up spending on clean energy.

Biden has reached out to European allies as a first step, trying to build consensus among China's trade partners about market and trade-based rewards and disincentives as a way of prodding China to reduce reliance on coal.

"None of these countries are wanting to save the planet and be completely selfless about this," Christiana Figueres, who helped broker the landmark climate deal in 2015, told The Associated Press. "Only if it also serves their interest." □



Will Paramount+ be a mountain or a molehill in streaming?

By **MAE ANDERSON**
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Paramount+ debuts Thursday as the latest — and last — streaming option from a major media company, this time from ViacomCBS. It's betting that consumers are willing to add yet another paid streaming service in an increasingly crowded field.

Its backers hope a smorgasbord of offerings — live sports and news, reboots of properties like "Frasier" and "Rugrats," original shows like "Star Trek: Discovery" and the ViacomCBS library — will entice viewers. But its relatively late entrance to a competitive landscape and a \$4 price increase compared to its predecessor, CBS All Access, could make it a challenging sell. "Paramount+ has a mountain of challenges ahead of it," said Tim Hanlon, CEO of Vertere Group, playing off the Paramount+ tagline, "A mountain of entertainment." (The venerable Paramount logo features — you guessed it — a mountain, and the streamer's recent ad campaign featured a number of characters from its shows climbing a snowy peak.) Over the last year and a half more and more

streaming services have debuted to challenge the reigning triumvirate of Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime. Disney+ kicked things off in late 2019, followed by WarnerMedia's HBO Max, NBCUniversal's Peacock and Discovery+.

In a way, ViacomCBS is a pioneer; CBS, then a separate company, debuted CBS All Access in 2014. The new service effectively rebrands All Access and adds other Viacom Properties channels including Comedy Central, BET, MTV and Nickelodeon.

But Paramount+ could have a brand awareness



In this Jan. 30, 2019 file photo, Alex Kurtzman, from left, Heather Kadin, Anson Mount, Sonequa Martin-Green and Ethan Peck participate in the "Star Trek: Discovery" show panel during the CBS All Access presentation at the Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour at The Langham Huntington in Pasadena, Calif. Associated Press

problem, Hanlon said. Most people associate the name Paramount with the mountainous title card that appears before movies. "Most consumers have very little understanding that Viacom, Paramount and CBS have the same parent,

so the marketing team has a big job in front of it," he said.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			5	9	7			
		9				7		
	1						3	
8			3		1			9
9				5				1
3			9		2			4
	5						1	
		6				2		
			2	4	8			

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/05

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Casa del Mar 2BR/2B

Week 2/1113 (16k);
Week 5/1315 (18k);
Week 5&6/1521 (20k/Wk.);
Week 7&8/1408 (18k/Wk.);
Week 8/1113; 8/1409 (17k/Wk.);
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Scholarship created to honor choreographer Ann Reinking

NEW YORK (AP) — Long before she became a Tony Award-winning choreographer, Ann Reinking waited tables to save up enough money to move to New York City. She arrived with \$500, no job lined up and no connections.

When she died at 71 last year, Reinking left behind many fans, friends and students as well as a legacy of a cool, muscular dance hybrid of jazz and burlesque. In her honor, friends and admirers have established The Ann Reinking Scholarship, a \$5,000 annual award and mentorship for a young dancer moving to New York City to help support them in their artistic endeavors.

"She was one of the most profoundly generous people that I've known," says Bebe Neuwirth, a two-time Tony winner who co-starred with Reinking in "Chicago" on Broadway. "This honors that in a way that also references her story of coming to New York."

The scholarship is being awarded by Off the Lane, a mentorship program for



Ann Reinking holds her Tony Award for best choreography for the musical "Chicago" at the 51st annual Tony Awards on June 1, 1997, in New York.

Associated Press

young performers moving to New York. It will be open to anyone, from anywhere, with a cut-off age of 21. "Teaching to her was such

a scholarship in her name keeps that generosity of spirit going."

Trained as a ballet dancer in her native Seattle, Reinking was known for her bold style of dance epitomized by her work in the hit revival of "Chicago," complete with net stockings, chair dancing and plenty of pelvic thrusts.

Reinking co-starred as Roxie Hart along with Neuwirth's Velma, and created the choreography "in the style of Bob Fosse," the show's original director and choreographer who died in 1987. She and Fosse worked together for 15 years and she was also his lover for several of them.

Her movie credits include "Annie" (1982), "Movie, Movie" (1978) and the documentary "Mad Hot Ballroom" (2005), which portrayed Reinking as a ballroom-dance competition judge for New York City kids. Reinking's work on "Chicago" earned her a 1997 Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards. Reinking replicated its choreography in productions

throughout the world.

Mindy Cooper, who was a swing in that 1996 "Chicago" revival, recalls once asking Reinking career advice that changed the arc of her career. She also remembers Reinking one day bringing her son to rehearsals at "Chicago," an encouraging signal that Broadway dancers could also have a family life.

"She created such a safe environment for performers to bring to the room with courage and artistry," said Cooper, now a professor of theater and dance at University of California, Davis. "Annie grew up in the ballet world like myself and came to theater from ballet. So we wanted to make a scholarship that could embrace all forms of dance."

The advisory board for the scholarship includes Cooper, Neuwirth and such Broadway luminaries as Chita Rivera, Joel Grey, Tommy Tune, Marilu Henner, Hinton Battle, Charlotte d'Amboise, Reinking's husband, Peter Talbert, and son, Chris Reinking Stuart.

Clooney, 'Billie Holiday' among AARP movie award honorees



This image released by Netflix shows Sacha Baron Cohen, center left, and Jeremy Strong in a scene from "The Trial of the Chicago 7."

Associated Press

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

"The United States vs. Billie Holiday," "Minari," "Da 5 Bloods" and "One Night in Miami" are among the films AARP is honoring at its annual Movies for Grownups Awards, the nonprofit organization said Thursday.

Director Lee Daniels' "The

United States vs. Billie Holiday," starring Andra Day as the jazz singer, was named best picture, while the Korean American family drama "Minari" got best intergenerational film. Spike Lee's Vietnam-themed "Da 5 Bloods" picked up best buddy picture and Regina King's "One Night in Mi-

ami..." about the fictional meeting of Malcolm X, Sam Cooke, Cassius Clay and Jim Brown, got best ensemble.

"We focus on films made by and for grownups," said Tim Appelo, the film and television critic for AARP. "When we started this a couple of decades ago, it was hard to find first movies about people of our age. I'm very pleased to see that we've got a bumper crop of movies and performances to choose from this year."

George Clooney is being honored this year with the career achievement award. The 59-year-old both directed and acted in his most recent film, "The Midnight Sky."

"He's the Cary Grant of our day, but he's also a fast-rising director," Appelo said. "He's perfect because he's just a slam dunk argument against ageism."

Jodie Foster too is singled

out for her supporting performance in "The Mauritanian," for which she also won the Golden Globe this week. Appelo said that the 58-year-old has said that she's glad to be her age and is looking forward to playing characters in their 60s and beyond.

"That's a big theme of ours, that life opens up after you turn 50," Appelo said.

Aaron Sorkin is a double honoree for writing and directing "The Trial of the Chicago 7." The top acting awards went to Sophia Loren, for "The Life Ahead," and Anthony Hopkins, for "The Father."

"The Trial of the Chicago 7" and "The United States vs. Billie Holiday" are two films Appelo said are particularly significant because of their historical value to a 50-plus audience. He also noted that this year included several important and nuanced depictions of Al-

zheimer's, including in "The Father" and in "Supernova," with Colin Firth and Stanley Tucci, which was named best grownup love story.

For the first time the organization is also recognizing television shows and performances. Catherine O'Hara took best actress for "Schitt's Creek," Mark Ruffalo got best actor for "I Know This Much is True" and "This Is Us" was named best series. Netflix's "The Queen's Gambit" got best limited series.

The virtual awards show will be broadcast by Great Performances on PBS on March 28 at 8 p.m. ET. □

6	3	4	5	9	7	1	8	2
5	2	9	1	8	3	7	4	6
7	1	8	4	2	6	9	3	5
8	4	5	3	7	1	6	2	9
9	6	2	8	5	4	3	7	1
3	7	1	9	6	2	8	5	4
2	5	7	6	3	9	4	1	8
4	8	6	7	1	5	2	9	3
1	9	3	2	4	8	5	6	7

Female owners encourage young women to pursue football path

By BARRY WILNER
AP Pro Football Writer

It took Sheila Ford Hamp about one second to respond when asked about the potential for women in key roles in the NFL.

"The sky is the limit for anything females want to do," said Hamp, the principal owner of the Detroit Lions. Echoing that statement was Dee Haslam, the Cleveland Browns' co-owner:

"We're seeing more and more women that love the sport and who want a career in sports. The door has swung wide open and I am so excited. I look forward to the moment when we don't have to talk about how we get the door open for women and people of color, that the door is wide open."

Those words were embraced by the 40 young women — and potential pro football employees — attending the league's fifth annual Women's Careers in Football Forum late last month. Although it was held virtually for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the forum's message came through loud and clear.

No more so than when listening to Hamp, who took over running the Lions before last season from her mother, Martha Ford, and Haslam, who owns the Browns with her husband, Jimmy.

Hamp related a telling story



In this Sept. 13, 2020, file photo, Sheila Ford Hamp, Detroit Lions principal owner and chairman, watches during the first half of the team's NFL football game against the Detroit Lions in Detroit.

Associated Press

about women's opportunities decades ago.

"When I graduated from college all I wanted to do was go work for the NFL. I loved football and grew up with it," she said. "I actually knew the commissioner, Pete Rozelle. My dad had taken me to league meetings and I had an opportunity to sit next to him at dinner and we kind of

became friends and he was impressed about how much a girl new about football.

"When I graduated, I went to see him, and he really tried and he liked me, but he couldn't think of one thing a woman could do in the NFL."

That, of course, was decades ago. Now, as Haslam emphasized, there

are women making impacts at every level of the league — from interns to scouts to coaches to aides to trainers to the executive office to the ownership suites. Indeed, Super Bowl winner Tampa Bay, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Tennessee, Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco also either have female owners

or women making key decisions at the highest team levels.

The league office has a similar makeup at every step of the ladder.

"The mountain of women in the room now who are ownership, it continues to grow and really is exciting," Haslam said. "There are some young women in the room, which is fantastic."

"As more and more women are out there and doing the job at such a competent level, it is just going to continue to grow. Just getting your foot in the door, especially in the NFL, is what you need to start out doing. Whatever job comes your way, do it better than anybody in the room, and other opportunities will come your way."

Hamp noted how the lines of communications need to be open regardless of the job or the people involved. As an example, she noticed that the Lions didn't have a changing room for some women on the football staff. She quickly fixed that.

"It seems little, but it is huge," Hamp said. "It means 'you are important to us.'"

"You have got to have an organization that people can speak up, that they can give you ideas and not be afraid to speak up. Listen to our employees and realize we are all in this together and all want to make this thing work." □

Women's tennis tour weighs changing 'frozen' COVID rankings

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The women's professional tennis tour is considering whether to make changes to its "frozen" ranking system adopted because of the coronavirus pandemic.

WTA CEO Steve Simon said in a statement emailed to The Associated Press the tour is "currently reviewing if any further adjustments to the rankings process will be made."

As things stand, the WTA is allowing players to count the points from their top 16 tournament results since March 2019. That allows someone such as No. 1 Ash

Barty to avoid being penalized for sitting out most of 2020 after the COVID-19 outbreak took hold.

Barty, for example, did not defend her 2019 title at the French Open in October, but still gets credit for the previous year's championship. The ATP announced Wednesday that it is tweaking its rankings rules with an eye to restoring the regular 52-week system fully by August 2022. The men's tour also said it will add about \$5 million to prize money being offered between now and June at some smaller tournaments by in-

creasing payouts that had been cut to 50% because of the pandemic.

As for WTA prize money, Simon said in his statement: "In addition to the over \$3 million in relief we provided to players in 2020, the WTA has assisted both players and tournaments by subsidizing 100% of the onsite prize money in 2021 through the utilization of broadcast revenues, bonus pool re-allocations and central organizational funding as we feel very strongly in supporting both of our members during these challenging times." □



Japan's Naomi Osaka holds the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after defeating United States Jennifer Brady in the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021.

Associated Press

Boston Marathon plan to hand out 70,000 medals roils runners

By WILLIAM J. KOLE

Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Distance running, traditionally one of the world's most genteel sports, has been roiled by an ugly mid-pandemic squabble over who should get a shot at a coveted Boston Marathon medal. Rival camps in the running world began snapping at each other's heels this week. It began after the Boston Athletic Association, which still hopes to hold a truncated in-person edition of the planet's most prestigious footrace in October, said it will award medals to up to 70,000 athletes if they go the distance wherever they are.

Practically within minutes of the BAA's announcement greatly expanding its virtual version of the race, a boisterous social media maelstrom ensued.

On one side: Runners who've spent years training to qualify to run the real thing, including some who complain that mailing medals to people who run the 26.2 miles (42.2 kilometers) in Dallas or Denver will cheapen the iconic Boston experience.

"A dagger through the heart to someone who has worked hard to finally earn the qualifying standard," one runner, Mark Howard of Salisbury, North Carolina,



In this April 17, 2017, file photo, runners head down the stretch to the finish line in the 121st Boston Marathon in Boston.

Associated Press

grouched on Twitter.

On the other: Pretty much everyone else, including the plodding masses and runners who raise millions for charities, who counter that anything that helps the 125-year-old marathon survive the COVID-19 crisis is worthwhile.

"A virtual Boston race that invites everyone is a reason to celebrate," said Maria Arana, a marathoner and coach in Phoenix. "It in no way takes away from my personal Boston Marathon experience or anyone else's."

The bickering seems to have caught many off-guard, if only because road racing has long had

a reputation as a kind and egalitarian sport.

It's one of the few disciplines where ordinary amateurs compete in real time on the same course as elite professionals, and where trash-talking is rare. As four-time Boston champion Bill Rodgers famously said: "Running is a sport where everyone gets along."

A notable exception to that gentility was the 1967 race, when race director Jock Semple ran after Kathrine Switzer — the first woman to run with an official bib number — and tried unsuccessfully to pull her off the course.

It also comes as the Boston Marathon and other big-

city races are struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic and looking for creative ways to keep runners engaged online.

The BAA put on a virtual version of the marathon last year, after the coronavirus pandemic forced it to first postpone its usual April running to September, and then cancel in-person racing altogether.

But that was limited to athletes who had already qualified to race or had registered as charity runners. This time, the first 70,000 people aged 18 or older who sign up and pay a fee will be able to earn a finisher's medal simply by covering the classic dis-

tance wherever they happen to be. They don't even need to run — they can walk.

"For the first time in our history, most everyone will have the opportunity to earn a Unicorn finisher's medal," BAA president and CEO Tom Grilk said in a statement.

Grilk said the in-person race, if it comes off as scheduled on Oct. 11, will have a reduced field to help keep athletes and spectators safe. Typically the Boston field is capped at around 30,000; the BAA hasn't said how much smaller it will be this autumn.

Josh Sitzler, a San Francisco runner who's qualified for the Boston Marathon three times, initially was among those who trashed the idea of giving out 70,000 medals as "a blatant money grab." "Respect yourself and the game. Don't do Boston unless you earn it," he tweeted. Then he had a change of heart, tweeting: "I was wrong. It's not the same as the actual Boston Marathon, and it doesn't devalue" the experience of those who meet strict qualifying standards for a chance to line up in Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

It's been a bad look, acknowledges Erin Strout, who covers the sport for WomensRunning.com. □

Major League Baseball to hold first Lou Gehrig Day on June 2



New York Yankees' Lou Gehrig poses at a spring training game in St. Petersburg, Fla., in this March 16, 1935, file photo.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball will hold its first Lou Gehrig Day on

June 2, adding Gehrig to Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente on the

short list of players honored throughout the big leagues.

Each home team will have "4-ALS" logos in ballparks to mark Gehrig's No. 4, and all players, managers and coaches will wear a Lou Gehrig Day patch on uniforms and may use red "4-ALS" wristbands. Teams that are off on June 2 will observe Lou Gehrig Day on June 3.

MLB said Thursday that the day will focus on finding cures and raising money for research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, which is known as Lou Gehrig's disease, the legacy of Gehrig and others who died of the progres-

sive disease that attacks nerve cells controlling muscles throughout the body. June 2 marks the 96th anniversary of when Gehrig made started at first base for the New York Yankees in place of Willy Pipp, starting his record streak of 2,130 consecutive games played. The mark stood until September 1995 by Baltimore's Cal Ripken Jr., who played 2,632 consecutive games in a streak that ended in 1998.

Gehrig died of ALS at age 37 on June 2, 1941. He was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame in 1939.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement that Gehrig's

"humility and courage continue to inspire our society" and "the pressing need to find cures remains."

MLB's committee includes Oakland outfielder Stephen Piscotty, whose mother died of ALS; Colorado outfielder Sam Hillard, whose father has been diagnosed with ALS; and Milwaukee catcher Jacob Nottingham, whose family includes six people who died of ALS.

MLB teams and players helped raise millions of dollars in 2014's ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. The New York Yankees often mark the anniversary of Gehrig's farewell speech on July 4, 1939. □